

Liberty is dying, will you do nothing?

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

Hello. My name is Rebecca Erdmann, and I am writing to you to tell you how important Net Neutrality is to me and to America. I hope that what I say here will convince you of its importance, and I hope that you will make the right choice.

I'm a high school student. I'm only seventeen years old, and I cannot say how important the internet is to my education, entertainment, and my personal freedoms. I have met many good friends online, people who I can't imagine what my life would be like without. The internet, lacking discrimination and censorship, has helped me with countless projects. America is supposed to be the land of the free. Our country is supposedly all about freedom. Watching the news and paying attention to what's going on around me over the last eight or so years, I have seen these statements become more and more hollow. Our 'land of the free' is quickly becoming 'land of the rich and discriminative corrupts.'

It's disgusting, what is going on. I'm tired of seeing more and more civil liberties and freedoms slipping away each day just so some already filthy rich lobbyists and corporations can fatten their already incredibly full wallets. If there is any democracy and interest in the rights of the COMMON AMERICAN left in this government, this is the chance to show it. FCC, you absolutely CANNOT abandon Net Neutrality!

Please don't let all this country stands for become a lie. Please don't abandon fairness, freedom, opportunity, innovation, and DEMOCRACY! Corporations already have way too much control in this country. This government needs to stop selling out the common interests and wants of the people, for which this country was FOUNDED, to rich old bastards who are only looking for more ways to make money. They only care about themselves and their own interests. They don't care about Americans, about me, my friends, my family, workers, children, students, anybody. Don't you see? Abandoning Net Neutrality is WRONG. If you do this, you would be deliberately stabbing a knife into the heart of the American economy and freedom.

Americans pride themselves as being role-models for the world. We think we're the best. We have here an opportunity to show some bite behind all that barking. Instead of pretending to be something we're not, why not step up to the plate and prove it? Why not take the initiative to defend freedom and show the world that we do care about freedom, and about average people. Show them that we're not all rich and selfish!

I shudder when I think of what will happen if you allow corporations to take over the internet. Discrimination, toll gates, censorship. The games I play and my activities may not exist anymore, if they don't pay enough. The people who I talk to everyday, the people who are my friends, my family, I may not be able to speak with them anymore. If content is taken away and concealed, my education will be jeopardized. It would be the same as someone ripping the phone out of my wall and locking me in my house. The internet allows unlimited access to information and news all around the world. For people isolated in small towns, it is the only way to stay informed. It also connects families and friends separated by states, and it enables people to meet other people that they would never be able to find just by traveling or chance.

As for the American Economy, the internet is ESSENTIAL for its well being. Look at it this way: The internet is like a giant market place, where consumers control the content and determine what's there and what isn't. We don't want corporations deciding what's best for us and what we want. WE want to decide. It's our right, it's our freedom. Putting corporations in control of the internet would kill many companies. It would eliminate choice and block off smaller companies, killing them off. It would be like blocking off every single store in a town and only leaving Wal-Mart open. Think of all the people who own small businesses and depend on them to make money and put food on the table. Think of all the dreams of entrepreneurs. Think of the individual, of the spirit of innovation and progress. If you destroy Net Neutrality, you are destroying the lives of individuals, stomping on the dreams of many, and destroying the spirit of the entrepreneur. Freedom is not freedom without choice and rights. Controversy and free access to information is essential for knowledge and success. Censorship kills freedom. It silences the voices of others and endorses lies and corruption.

There were a few times in my life when I felt so alone and scared, frustrated, and sad that I seriously considered injuring myself and maybe even taking my own life. My friends that I met on the internet were, at times, the only people there for me, and they helped me through. Just as if they were really beside me, they comforted me, and they helped me realize that it was the wrong way to deal with my problems. If not for them, I honestly don't know if I would be writing this letter right now. There are others like me who have likely experienced the same thing. Without a free internet allowing people to connect, what would we do? Where would we be? I cannot stress how important Net Neutrality is to me, and to others.

Time after time in our history, we've seen how corporations, trusts, and lobbyists have destroyed the economy and the lives of Americans. Don't let this happen again! Learn from the past!

I beg you, FCC, defend our freedom, and stand up for what's right. Don't let lobbyists control our lives and our freedom! Step up to the plate, and help us be a great country! Keep discrimination off of my internet! Keep it free, and keep it fair! It is the job of this government to protect, defend, and provide for the rights, freedoms, liberties, and the interests of its citizens. Net Neutrality is in our best interest and defends and upholds our freedom and liberty. It is your duty to protect it.

If you don't want to listen to me, then please listen to these men.

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

-- Benjamin Franklin, Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759

"We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people."

-- John F. Kennedy

"One cannot and must not try to erase the past merely because it does not fit the present."

-- Golda Meir, Israeli political leader (1898-1978)

"Censorship of anything, at any time, in any place, on whatever pretense, has always been and always be the last resort of the boob and the bigot."

-- Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, American playwright (1888-1953)

"Free societies...are societies in motion, and with motion comes tension, dissent, friction. Free people strike sparks, and those sparks are the best evidence of freedom's existence."

-- Salman Rushdie

"Censorship is telling a man he can't have a steak just because a baby can't chew it."

-- Mark Twain

Thank you for your time. I hope, and I pray, that you will make the right choice. Defend Net Neutrality, and you defend Freedom and Liberty. In addition, you defend my future, and the futures of millions of other Americans. The lives and fates of millions ride on your decision. Help us, protect us, from oppression and discrimination. Don't let liberty die.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Ann Erdmann